THE VEILED WOMEN

One of the Series of "Gray Mask Stories"

By Wadsworth Camp.

IT was really the trivial fact of the inspector's cold that involved Nora and Garth in the troubles of Addington Alsop. To begin with, the inspector's indisposition confined him to his flat. It held Nora there in the part of a nurse. It drew Garth, who would have braved the most virulent contagion to be near her. Most important of all, it allowed the mighty Alsop to apply for police help without fear of detection by the reporters and agents constantly swarming at headquarters.

When Garth entered the flat that afternoon he was, unknowingly, already on the threshold of the strange case; for he had read in the noon editions the brief paragraph which recited an accident to all appearances common enough. A man had been picked up unconscious in the middle of a quiet street. Evidently he had been struck by an automobile. Two details, however, arrested Garth's attention. The victim, Ralph Brown, he knew as a successful private detective. Moreover, the outrage had occurred during the slack hours before the dawn. Apparently no clue as to its perpetrators remained. Garth spoke of that casually to the inspector. The huge, suffering man was scarcely intrigued. Wrapped in an ancient dressing gown, his throat smothered beneath flannel, he sat in an easy chair, facing the fire, whose coals he perpetually reproved with a frown. He groaned. There was utter despair in the rumbling, animal-like note. Nora laughed.

"Laugh away," the inspector roared, "but make Garth forget he's a detective if he can't do better than hound a sick man with a cheap automobile case."

"These unimportant things, father, are sometimes the most important of all," she said. "Jim's right. It's odd no witnesses can be found."

As if there had been something prophetic in her words and her attitude, a muffled knock came from the outer door. Two men entered the living room. The one in advance was young, with a frightened and apprehensive face. His companion was older and portlier, with narrow eyes and full-blooded cheeks. And those eyes were uneasy. For Garth they did not quite veil a sense of sheer terror.

"It's Mr. Alsop, father," Nort said. "Mr. Addington Alsop."

The inspector had already struggled to rise. He conceded the importance of this unexpected call. He apologized for his failure.

"Nora's got me wound up like a mummy——"

Alsop broke in rapidly.

"No politeness, inspector. I must speak to you. I'm up against it. They're after me."

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HE sat down heavily. The young man, whom he introduced as his secretary, Arthur Marvin, lighted a cigarette with trembling fingers. Garth watched them both while the inspector explained that they might speak freely before him and Nora. Alsop, he knew, because of his genius for organizing money and industry, and his utter ruthlessness in dealing with those whom necessity had thrown within his power, had made dangerous and active enemies. The detective could understand the financier's position. His death might be a cheap risk for outside fanatics to take to destroy his leadership against the forces of radicalism, for there were few men strong enough to replace him. Alsop had a newspaper in his hand now, and was holding it out to the inspector, while with his forefinger he tapped the paragraph which told of Brown's accident.

"No accident," he muttered. "That man worked for me—a precaution any fool would take. Well, he must have found out what he was after last night, and they got him, and thought they had killed him. They tell me at the hospital he's still unconscious."

Alsop handed Garth a crumpled, torn and soiled postcard.

"That came in the noon mail. Must have been picked up by somebody and dropped in a post box. I figure Brown, before they got him, threw it out of a window, or some such thing."

Garth read the card—a single line, almost undecipherable:

"Danger tomorrow night. Brown."

"That means tonight," Garth said. "Had you planned anything important for tonight?"

"The conference with capitalists and politicians at which we settle on certain legislation that will put some of these foreign anarchists on the skids, snatch American labor beyond their influence, and give the honest business man a chance to make a fair profit by driving his men as he should. See here, inspector, I expect some important men from Wall street and Washington tonight. I can't let them walk into a bomb, and I don't want any high explosives myself."

"Nasty situation. I'm no politician. Fight crime. We'll see what we can do. It's a good thing you found Garth here."

"What is it, Mr. Alsop?" he asked. "You've something else to tell us."

"A ghost story," he said, with an attempt at a laugh. "Fact is, Marvin and I and some of the servants are haunted by a veiled woman. I can only tell you facts and let you judge. I daresay you know about my house on the river near the city line. It is lonely for that neighborhood, and very old. I've always heard stories about a ghost, a veiled woman on the upper floor—some connection with the suicide of a beautiful girl long ago. You know the sort of thing. It's always told about old houses. The point is, I saw that veiled woman last night, and she gave me rather too much evidence of spirituality."

"Why do you connect a ghost with anarchists?" the inspector demanded.

"Because," Alsop answered, perfectly seriously, "I believe the thing was after my papers."

"Then why suspect your visitor of being a ghost?"

"Because," Alsop said patiently, "this visitor had every appearance of walking through a locked door. I've a safe in my room, and as an extra precaution, when I've had important papers at the house, I've locked my door. I went upstairs late last night. There was no light in the upper hall, but a glow came from the lamps downstairs, this sort of radiance I saw the figure of a woman, clothed in white, her face hidden behind a white veil, come apparently from my room, cross the hall, and disappear. I cried out. I sprang for the door. It was locked. Marvin and I searched the house. My daughters are in Florida. The only women in the place were servants. There seemed no way in or out of the house without the collusion of one of these. And I've had them a long time. It's hard to suspect them. Besides, Marvin has had much the same experience. Tell them, Arthur."

"As a motive," Marvin said slowly, "I might mention the fact that I often take my work upstairs—letters of Mr. Alsop's to answer, statements to make out. The first time the thing happened was Thursday night. It must have been after midnight. I was in bed. I awakened with an uncomfortable feeling of being no longer alone. I saw this figure that Mr. Alsop describes. It did not seem to come from anywhere."

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"THE thing—white veil and all—seemed to materialize out of nothing. It moved softly about the room as if searching—searching. I thought of the letters on my desk. I called out instinctively, 'Who's there?' There was no reply. The figure did not hurry. It stepped behind a screen by the fireplace. I sprang up and went there. I couldn't believe the evidence of my eyes. There was no one—nothing behind the screen. I examined the door. It was locked as I had left it, with the key on the inside. There was no way in or out of that room. Yet the veiled woman had been there, and had gone, leaving no trace."

"Catch your enemies and you'll catch your ghost," Garth said drily. "I'd like a shot at both."

"What you want," the inspector said to Alsop and Marvin, "is protection for yourselves and your distinguished guests. What the police want is to catch these fellows red-handed. We'll try to fit the two things. Don't lose your nerve. Go ahead with your conference, and trust Garth to find out how your veiled woman gets in and out of the house and through locked doors. There may be no danger for you tonight. We've only Brown's postcard to go on. That looks serious, and I'll do my best to protect you."

And when Nora had gone to the door with Alsop and Marvin he called Garth over, and hurriedly whispered:

"It's a big chance, Garth, but dangerous as dynamite. These fellows won't hesitate to blow that house up if they can't block Alsop's dirty politics any other way. And, remember, you're fighting a woman who behaves like a ghost. Take it from me, she's the one you've got to be afraid of. She has the brains."

"If I could get something out of Brown," Garth mused.

"Maybe he's conscious now," the inspector said. "Run up to the hospital, then look over the neighborhood where he was found. Come back here by five, and we'll lay our plans."

In Brown's room the blinds were down. The greenish light scarcely found the upturned face. It sought rather the bandage, ghastly and white, wound thickly about the head. From time to time Brown's lips moved with a pitiful futility. Garth, while the nurse cautioned him to silence, bent closer, so that at last he could define the pallid face and the closed eyelids that trembled. Suddenly the eyes opened. From them into Garth's brain sprang an impression of immeasurable terror as if they still secreted the outline of some monstrous vision.

Garth started back as the injured man, apparently spurred by that recollection, struggled to rise, sat bolt upright, his head swaying drunkenly, while from his wide throat vibrated an accusing and despairing cry:

"The veiled woman! Oh, my God! The veiled woman!"

"Take hold of yourself! You've seen this woman. You've got to talk to me."

But Brown screamed incoherently with a diminishing power. The nurse had run into the hall. Through the open doorway her voice tore anxiously, summoning a house physician:

"For God's sake, don't look behind the white veil! No! No! I have. That's madness!"

The doctor slipped in and hurried to the bedside. In response to his touch Brown lay down.

"Don't dope him," Garth begged. "That man knows things on which many lives depend. He must tell them to me before night. When will he be able to talk straight?"

"You don't seem to understand. A frightful fracture at the base of the brain. He seems inclined to be quiet enough now."

The doctor turned away. Garth followed him to the door, urging him to use his skill to make Brown talk. The nurse had remained by the bed. Garth heard her sharp cry through his own pleading. The sound puzzled him because it was a trifle strangled. The doctor, however, turned like a flash and hurried back to the bed. Garth looked. The nurse bent over the bandaged head. The doctor fumbled quickly beneath the bed clothes. He arose, glanced at Garth, and spread his hands. Garth picked at his hat, unwilling to believe.

"You mean," he whispered, "that he's gone?"

The doctor nodded. The nurse sobbed once. Garth had not noticed how young her face was.

The block where the murdered man had been found was flanked by long rows of similar houses. Its cobblestones, unfriendly to traffic, made it an ideal place for the brutal deception which had been attempted.

Opposite the spot where Brown had been picked up Garth paused and looked curiously across the street. The dreary house line was broken there by a number of basement and first-story shops. His eyes, alert for the unusual, had found it. A basement window displayed intricately patterned rugs, lamps of the orient, unfamiliar and barbaric jewelry. The fact that he had not noticed the window sooner testified to a significant discretion in its arrangement. It was, he fancied, designed less to attract curiosity than to satisfy it once it was aroused. Half-derisively he recalled that oriental women went veiled—customarily secreted their faces behind white veils.

He had intended entering all these shops and houses in search of a witness of the attack on Brown. He determined now to proceed rather more warily. Suppose Brown, spying or about to spy, had been assaulted in one of these basements—for instance, in the oriental shop which had straightway aroused his interest?

He crossed the street and darted quickly down the steps from one side, so that he was sure he had taken by surprise whoever was in the place. His special detective sense was immediately impressed by much that was ominous in the shadowed room. The echoes of such an attack as Brown had suffered could have been easily smothered here.

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A LONG, low divan sprawled in the rear of the shop against a tapestry hanging of a colorful design. On this divan, seated cross-legged, was the figure of a man, like an image in a somber and guarded temple. He wore a fez, set formally on his head. One hand clasped the sinuous stem of a water pipe.

The round, flaccid, repulsive face defied classification. Garth could not be sure whether it was Egyptian, Turkish, Arabian, or Semitic. He only knew that it was evil and accustomed to perfect control, for he suspected that his rapid entrance had made the concealment of the fez and the alteration of that ritual attitude impossible. In a matter-of-fact tone Garth spoke of examining the rugs and antiques.

The only motion in the room was a lazy curling from the water pipe of white smoke which faded in the darkened, perfumed air. Then the curtain moved stealthily at one end, disclosing a dark face of Levantine cast. This man came through, carefully replacing the curtain behind him, stroked his bony hands, and demanded Garth's desires. The immobility of the cross-legged creature ceased. The stem of the water pipe was he raised it to his mouth writhed in sinuous curves. He commenced to puff. The water bubbled unevenly.

Garth examined the rugs with growing excitement. He was prepared to believe that he had stumbled on a meeting place. He felt himself the object of suspicion. It was conceivable to him that he might suffer a fate similar to Brown's.

Garth started. The unequal bubbling of the pipe had accompanied all his thoughts: Constantly it would pause, then recommence. The idea which had been struggling unconsciously in the detective's brain took shape. The uneven bubbling possessed a significance beyond the pleasures of nicotine. It suggested a means of communication, a code.

The house was very old. It was one of a row built simultaneously before the fire laws had amounted to much. He was sure that the dividing walls between these basements were not fireproof. As nearly as he could tell from the surface he examined, they would probably be lath-and-plaster, with perhaps, rubble in the space between. His next step was to measure as accurately as he could with his eye the distance between the entrance and the curtain, which was like a ceremonial background for the man in the fez. Stooping to inspect one of the rugs, he struck the flooring with his fist, as if by accident. He was satisfied. There was no cellar beneath this basement. He dared hope that he would see what lay behind the curtain.

Approximately as nearly as he could the subtleties of a buyer, he promised to make up his mind and return with his decision the next morning.

He walked slowly to the corner, studying the house on either side of the shop. The one to the right was a cheap boarding-house. The one on the other side was evidently a private dwelling.

At the nearest hardware store he bought an auger and a screwdriver. Then he entered the alley that bisected the block, and, counting the houses, knocked at the kitchen door of the one on the right of the oriental shop. The servant who admitted him verified his hazard. At this hour the occupants were at work. She was, for the present, alone in the house.

Garth showed her his badge, warned her to make no noise, and to stay close to him. The girl, frightened and unable to comprehend, followed him into the basement. He paced from the front of the house along the wall to a point which, according to his calculations, was opposite the hidden portion of the shop. He glanced up then with satisfaction. Against a thin and antiquated partition was suspended one of those heavy and unwieldy gas meters which are found only in very old buildings.

Garth drew up a table, climbed upon it, and examined the thick screws which held the contrivance in place. With his screwdriver he commenced noiselessly to remove one of these. He thought it likely that the screw hole would go all the way through. If it did not, his auger would complete the journey. He instructed the girl to draw the blinds and close the door so that the room would be darker. He pulled the screw from the rotten wall. The aperture was sufficiently large. It admitted a repellent odor he had noticed in the shop; so he put his eyes to the hole.

The drone of voices reached him, but at first he could see very little—shadowy outlines circling a dull, glowing thing close to the floor—a brazier, he decided, about which men sat. Then he started, for he thought he saw something long and white, like a woman. But the smoke in the aperture hurt his eyes. He had to close it. When he opened it again there was nothing white, but out of the droning voices came words in English with a foreign accent, and he crouched against the wall, listening.

He marveled that he should hear just these words at this particular moment.

"The police are suspicious," he heard, "so it's been put ahead. At 9 o'clock tonight. Two raps on the west door at Alsop's. The veiled woman will open the door and take the bomb, and then, by God, we'll show them!"

He replaced the screw. He got down from the table able to plan definitely. Against her protests, he took the girl to headquarters and warned the matron to let her communicate with no one before 9:30. He hurried to the flat then, and told the inspector and Nora of Brown's death and of his experience at the shop.

"That's where Brown was struck," he ended, "and Brown was right. They are after Alsop and his crowd tonight with dynamite, and the veiled woman's the figure of chief danger. Do you know, chief, I'm going to let them hand her that bomb, then I'll try to handle her."

"It's taking too big chances to let them get as far as the house with the thing."

"It's the veiled woman I'm thinking of," Garth answered. "Grab these people before her share commences, and you'll probably never see her. She'll bob up here and there, causing infinite trouble, because everything she does has the marks of a fiendish cleverness. Let me take the risk and land her."

* * * *

THE inspector thought for a long time. It was clear the idea tempted speculation. It was 7 o'clock when he had completed his arrangements. He took the subway to Harlem and continued in a taxicab.

Alsop's great wealth permitted him a rural loneliness even in this expensive neighborhood. Garth dismissed the cab at the edge of a wide property along the river, made sure he had not been followed, then climbed the fence, and entered a thick piece of woods.

Immediately he knew there was some one. He sprang aside, whipping out his revolver, crouching against an expected attack; for a figure blacker than the night had glided in his path from behind a a tree trunk, and the hands carried something round, black—

"Put that thing down," Garth whispered, "then up with your hands!"

Her laugh barely reached him.

"I thought it was you, Jim."

"What are you doing here, Nora? For a minute I looked for the veiled woman."

"I've come," she said confidently, "for her, and to see that you don't throw your life away."

"You must go back," he said. "What's in that bundle you're carrying?"

"A white gown," she said simply, "and a white veil, so that I may take the bomb after I have trapped this queer creature; so that I may talk to these men and learn how wide the organization is."

She argued logically enough that there was less risk this way than the other. Once she had the bomb in her hands she great danger would be over.

They paused at the edge of the woods. The dark, vague mass of the building frowned at them. The windows, Garth gathered were heavily curtained, for no gleam of light escaped.

"I am going in with you, Jim, to see it through." Nora whispered. "Don't be disapproving. I only want to help."

"Nora," he said hoarsely, "since I lost my temper, with Black, you've not been kind. You know I want you with all my heart——"

"Hush! You were not to speak of that. Don't you see? It's because I don't know that I can't let you take such chances with death. That's why I'm here, Jim."

Inside the house the atmosphere of danger reached Garth more positively than it had done even through Brown's unreasoning terror. Alsop and Marvin met them in the hall. Both were white-faced and nervous. Through the open door of a library Garth saw five men in evening clothes gathered about a table which was littered with papers. Alsop closed the door.

"The house is surrounded by detectives," Garth said. "We've arranged to take care of the one with the bomb. For there is a bomb, Mr. Alsop. There's no point lying about that."

Alsop pointed to the closed door of the library.

"All my figures, all of my plans that I've ever put on paper I've brought out here for the first time tonight for this conference. Don't you suppose those devils know? And that thing—you can laugh at me if you like—I tell you that thing white is after them. When I went upstairs just now to bring them from the safe I felt it. I saw something white, and I ran down. Ask Marvin. I'm afraid. I acknowledge it."

"I'm not sneering," Garth said, grimly. "We know your veiled woman is actually to be in this house at 9 o'clock. It's likely enough she's upstairs now. I'll search every rat hole, because her apparent magic is pure trickery, and if she isn't to be found upstairs, we've a net arranged down here for her a little later."

"Better find out what you can now," Alsop advised.

Then he went back to the library, and Garth and Nora climbed to the upper hall. Garth supposed that Marvin would have made a light for them, but of all the doors that opened from the stair landing one alone was wide, and no light gleamed through that.

"Marvin!" he called, and again: "Marvin! Marvin!"

Garth stepped forward. Nora reached out and grasped his arms. The quality of her voice startled him.

"Don't go in there without a light, Jim."

He shook off her hands. He entered the dark room, and immediately he knew she had been right, that he had advanced too precipitately. He stumbled against something soft and yielding, and went down, stretching out his hand to save himself.

"Get back to the hall, Nora!" he cried.

* * * *

HE took his flashlight from his pocket, pressed the control, and turned the ray on the features his hand had touched in the dark. Marvin was stretched, face downward, on the floor near the head of the bed.

Nora, with a reluctant sir, had come closer. Crying out her horror, she dicated the collar at the back of Marvin's neck.

"Blood! Like Brown. The same place as Brown's wound."

Garth ran to the bathroom and brought water with which he bathed Marvin's face and head. He looked up after a moment with a sigh of relief.

He had started, he said, up the stairs, thinking Garth at his heels. He had been about to press the electric light switch.

"I knew she was there," he sobbed. "I saw her—all white, and with a veil over her face. Then I don't know. I don't remember being struck. Everything went black."

"Are you still anxious to try that plan of yours, Nora?"

She nodded. She went uncertainly from the room. Marvin stumbled after them. They helped him down the stairs and to a sofa in the lower hall. Garth led Nora to the west door.

In silence and with determination she slipped on the white gown she had brought and draped the white veil over her face. Garth arranged a screen just within the doorway. He turned out the electric lamp, lighted a single candle, and placed it on a stand at some distance.

"Wait behind the screen," he said. "I shall be at the other end of the hall just within the library door. Anybody coming from the interior of the house must pass me. I'll grab the woman. When you hear the two raps open the door and take the bomb. I'll get Alsop and his crew out of the library and where their precious skins will be safe."

She shivered and slipped behind the screen. He went to the library, knocked, entered, and closed the door. The faces that greeted him were restless with misgiving.

"I want you all out of this room now, please," Garth said. "I've delayed moving you as long as I dared, so, if anything goes wrong, those outside won't know you have left. Take them to the back part of the house, Mr. Alsop. Into the cellar, if you like. It's safest."

Garth turned out the light, went to the window, opened the casement, and peered through. But he could hear nothing, see nothing. He couldn't wait. It was necessary for him to go to the door from behind which he was to ambush the veiled woman in order that Nora might take her place.

As he turned a thin, tinkling sound stole from the silence of the room. He felt his way to the telephone and lifted the receiver.

"Hello!" he whispered. "Hello!"

The inspector's hoarse voice came to him.

"You, Garth? I'm in the gardener's cottage. Tell me Alsop and his people are safe."

"Yes," Garth said. "Hurry! Hurry! What's up?"

"For Heaven's sake, be careful," the inspector answered, "because, Garth, all your dope was right. There are four of them in the grounds now, and going to get away with it. The veiled woman——"

"She's in the house," Garth murmured. "Hush! I hear——"

He broke off. Through the appalling quietness of the house he had heard distinctly two sharp raps. Yet he had seen no one pass the dim frame of the library doorway—nothing white.

He ran through. In the wan candle light he could see the slender figure in the white gown and the flowing veil slip from behind the screen and open the door. Then Nora would get the bomb, but where was the real veiled woman?

Garth knew from the black patch at the end of the corridor that the door was wide. In that dark patch he suddenly saw the silhouette of a man. The hands were stretched out as if to meet the hands which Nora appeared to offer for the bomb. But the man carried no bomb. Garth cried out, drawing his own revolver, darting forward:

"Nora! Look out!"

He had seen that the man's fingers fondled an automatic, raised it, aimed it at the confident, expectant figure.

"For police spies!" the man called.

Before Garth could reach the door the harsh, tearing report of the automatic came, and was repeated twice. Garth saw the form that he loved sway, clutch at nothing, without a cry, crumble and lie motionless across the threshold.

Before the other could turn his gun on him the detective had grappled with the murderer. He bore him to the porch floor and struck him across the temple with the butt of his revolver. Garth arose then, and, scarcely aware of what he did, placed his police whistle at his lips and blew shrilly through the night.

Garth shook. He covered his face with his hands, for the dim, unreal illumination of the flickering candle had shown him that the figure was no longer completely white. The reason for its stillness exposed a scarlet testimony.

* * * *

THAT which Garth had feared but had forgotten in the rush of his more personal terror rent the silence with a chaotic turmoil. A terrific detonation was followed by a shattering of glass. Shouts and curses arose from the house. Some one hurried across the drive and up the steps. Garth was aware of a heavy hand on his shoulder. He glanced up at the inspector's startled face.

"What's the matter with you? You've let them use their infernal bomb. You're responsible for Alsop and his people."

"They're safe," Garth answered.

"The veiled woman!" the inspector said. "Dead! You've done well here anyway, Garth. Let's have a look."

Frantically Garth snatched at his arm and tried to pull him away.

"Don't look! Not you!"

"What's that?" the inspector whispered, and his voice was suddenly afraid. Garth followed his glance. From the black shadows of the woods a white figure glided.

Garth's shaking fingers reached out and lifted the stained veil from the silent form. He drew back. His cry was like a sob. For a long time the inspector and Garth stared at the features, apprehensive even in death, of the secretary, Marvin.

Nora, who ran up the steps crying out her fear for those in the house, gave Garth no opportunity for questions or for the expression of that relief which shook him with a power nearly physical.

The four prisoners were brought to the hall. They knew they must stand trial for Brown's death as well as for this attempt. The one who had shot Marvin and who had gone down before Garth's attack was still dazed. Garth identified him as the man who had disguised himself as an oriental in the shop. The sharp face of the Levantine twitched with hatred and fright. The other two, although he knew the type, the detective had never seen before. They boasted that the shop had been only an outpost for this affair. Through a dictaphone and the telegraphy of the pipe, instructions had been sent to and from their headquarters. Tonight, they declared, the shop had ceased to be useful. No trail would lead from it to the central force that worked in New York.

As they drove home in a taxicab Garth said to Nora:

"You haven't told us what happened when I left you by the west door."

"You remember we had got Marvin on a sofa in the hall," Nora answered. "He must have seen you close the door when you went in the library to warn Alsop and the others, because from my hiding place I saw him get up, and, with no appearance of an injured man, sneak along the wall to the stairs. I followed him up and, Jim, I found him on the floor in his room again, but this time he didn't hear me, and he was talking. Then I saw his whole game. There was a dictaphone hidden beneath the bed with which he had probably communicated with those outside the house for days. We had stopped him the first time when he had just learned of my intended masquerade. Don't you see? He had to tell them that. We caught him, and he scratched himself to throw us off the track with the details of another case like Brown's. Now I heard him tell everything—just what I was to do, and that Alsop and the others were in the library. I ran downstairs, but when I reached the lower hall I saw him coming after me. So I said I had changed my mind, that I was afraid, that I wanted only to leave the house. I went to the kitchen and slipped out, intending to get to you, Jim, with my information. But I knew these men were in the grounds and I had to go carefully. When I crept up to the library window I thought I saw you. Then the telephone bell rang, and I couldn't make you hear."

"Of course," Garth said. "Marvin, coming down, had seen that the library door was open, and that there was no longer a light there. It was too late to use the dictaphone again, but he knew he must change his instructions and tell them not to waste the bomb in the library. So he threw on his disguise and rushed to the west door as he had originally planned, in too much of a hurry to dream such a mistake could happen. I suppose he got past while I was at the window.

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"MARVIN," the inspector mused, "was just the man for them. Probably full of wild-eyed ideas, and feeling a divine call to help smash Alsop. I hold no brief for that millionaire. My part in life is to see that the law's kept. These rough boys had certainly fixed Marvin to help them break the laws into little bits of pieces. So maybe he deserves just what he got. Alsop tells me he didn't trust any of his employes with his schemes for putting a stop to socialistic movements in his concerns, and that's where the big hitch came. Marvin, whenever he knew there were private papers in the house, was always searching. He had a key to Alsop's door. He used that old ghost story, and dressed himself up in case any of the servants should see him. Their fright would give him time to cover himself. When Alsop did catch him he came across with the terrible experiences he had himself with the veiled woman. Ought to have got on to him before."

"It wasn't easy to suspect him," Nora said. "But it's easily explained now. The time it took you, Jim, to go to the hospital and to visit the shop was just the time he needed to return to Wall street with Mr. Alsop, make some excuse, and get into the shop by a back way to receive his new orders. It was simple enough."

The inspector grunted.

"If we saw all the simple things there'd be no need for detectives."

He commenced to cough with a persistent vehemence.

"Take me home, Nora," he groaned. "Back to the fireplace and the flannel for the old man. You're always right, Nora. Isn't she always right, Garth?"

But Garth recalling that moment before Nora and he had entered the Alsop house, shook his head. Nora must have seen and understood, for she laughed lightly.

"Maybe she is," Garth said thoughtfully, but sometimes I wonder."

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HE CRIED OUT AS BROWN HAD DONE: "THE VEILED WOMAN!"

A DAY WITH THE MARINES AT QUANTICO

Wonderful Schools Where "Devil Dogs" Receive All Sorts of Training—Building Houses for Officers, Quarrying Stone, Plumbing and Mechanical Work Fit Men for Splendid Positions After They Leave the Marine Corps.

BY WILLIAM J. WHEATLEY.

JUST a few minutes spent in the United States marine camp at Quantico, Va.—that service city of unchained energy and unbounded resourcefulness—is enough to drive the tired summer feeling in its worst stages from any one. One steps from the train right into the midst of the camp, and it is but a moment when the visitor suddenly realizes that he is carrying on with a snap which has made this organization of "devil dogs" famous throughout the civilized world. The visitor just gets the stride automatically, and it stays long after the camp is left.

The marines are doing something all the time. They are soldiers and scholars, too, at the marine base. These fighters, who know no fear, are accomplishing things at the post. There is a system of schools down there where they are taught any subject which the individual wants to know. They are reducing expenses, making themselves better soldiers and citizens, and, while they are learning, they are maintaining their high record in drills, marksmanship and combat work. It is a full day they have there for five days a week, and an afternoon at school makes them snappier in their movements on the drill the day after. Their work as soldiers can only be expressed in the superlative degree, and a three-year hitch in this corps, if they decide to go back into civil life, sends them there as the best soldier that the country turns out, and at the same time with an education equal to that of a college or trade school. While they go to school five days a week, they still drill the best, their discipline is the best, the morale the best, and they can hit the bull's-eye every time with their high-powered rifles. And their service leaves them equipped to hit a good job and be able to perform it, when they get out.

"Tell it to the marines" is an old saying, and an appropriate one to this camp, the largest shore base of this historic and heroic organization that has made its fame, but is not letting it go at that. It is continuing. Tell it to the marines of Quantico, and presto! it is done.

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WHY, down at the base on the west shore of the Potomac river those fighting boys are just remodeling the face of the earth. They are doing it at a low cost—that is, comparatively speaking. They are giving the taxpayers something for their training, and they are keeping the soldier training course down to a low price.

Transforming the earth is only a little part of a day's work down there. They are just completing the work of shaving tons of earth off the top of a couple of hills and putting it in between, thus making one of the finest and most level parade grounds of any military organization. They are doing it with tractors and road machines which they have salvaged. Give these marines a piece of machinery that some other branch of the government has cast off as a piece of junk and in a short time they have it working better than when it was first made. This is not exaggeration, either, as any one visiting the camp may see just how it is done.

A little bungalow is needed to house an officer or non-commissioned officer and his family. All of the barrack buildings, put up to meet the rush of war needs, are in the low part of the camp near the river. Just a word from an authority, and along come a few marines, with the aid of a caterpillar tractor. They tie a chain around the selected building, attach it to the tractor, and up the steep hill to the residential part of the camp it goes. There the camp carpenters are waiting, together with the plumbers, and in a short time, with a front and back porch added, it is a beautiful bungalow. They accomplish all this without even taking out the windows, and there isn't any breakage, either.

When they haven't the material they go out scouting in the 7,000 acres which the camp covers and find it. There they get out the raw material and prepare it for use in building. Such is the case with a large officers' club structure, which they are building of stone. They are building a large retaining wall for the Italian gardens, which are to be between the clubhouse and the river. This wall is of finest sandstone, of the kind used in the Capitol and White House.

They needed a lot of stone for the house, so the scouts went out and discovered a stone quarry in which was some of the most beautiful gray and green stone that could be found. They have started to get it out. They have built the derrick and other necessary machinery, and have built a railroad to cheapen the transportation of the stone from the quarry to the clubhouse site. For the lumber they have erected a saw mill and are turning out the material from the extensive forests on the lands.

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AS for the architecture, the marines did most of that, too. There is a civilian architect at the base, and under his direction the marines drew the plans and outlined the specifications under which the handsome clubhouse will be built.

This is not soldiering, you might say. Well, it is, and this work helps to make them better soldiers. Ask the officers who have served with all kinds of marines in their time, and they will tell you that the educated soldier makes the best. He is an asset to the nation and to himself and family, both in peace and war. This work teaches him to be resourceful. It teaches him how to get things done when others fail, a necessary matter in every military action.

It is all done by the system of schools at Quantico. They teach the marines everything, first from the book and then by practical work. Just a glance at their accomplishments in the past year will indicate that the school plan in force is a success.

School call sounds at 1 o'clock every day except Saturday and Sunday. Promptly at that hour any one may see these exemplifications of snap and energy in their natty summer uniforms, sitting erect at long tables studying their books. The courses are provided under contract by one of the large correspondence schools, and the same certificates and diplomas are issued except that they are countersigned by Marine Corps officials. At first, efforts were made to have regular classes of instruction, with the officers as teachers, but this, after experiment, was found to be impractical owing to the constantly changing personnel, which precluded keeping any one group together on any selected course until that subject was completed. Under the correspondence system a man may start at any time and progress depends upon himself entirely.

Of course, there is help for the men who find some part of their subject which they cannot fathom. Practically all of this work is under enlisted men, many of them college men, who know the particular subjects of which they are in charge.

Lieut. J. B. Neill, attached to the staff of Brig. Gen. Smedley D. Butler, commandant of the camp, is in direct charge of the school system. Under him is a staff of enlisted men who handle the instruction work directly. His assistant is Sergt. F. C. Frost.

Every class on a particular subject has its section of a building where the men are assembled for study periods of three hours each afternoon of five days each week. The mornings are given over to field work, which every good soldier must know. And much of this field work involves practical application of studies which the men are taking up.

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IN many cases the marine is enabled to increase his pay through what he has learned in school. The Marine Corps provides extra pay for specialists. For instance, a man who takes up plumbing, as soon as he learns the trade, gets a job in the maintenance department of the camp, where he receives an addition to his pay as a soldier only.

But a marine is not restricted to those courses, which will only be of help to him in the camp, but he is urged to take such courses. Salesmanship, navigation, shipbuilding, electrical engineering, surveying are some of the many subjects taught.

Those who take the electrical courses are given work wiring the camp buildings, and the surveyors get practical work in the camp maintenance department. Down at the quarry in the Potomac river is a subchaser turned over to the Marine Corps by the Navy. The automobile pupils have taken her engines out and are thoroughly overhauling them, and the men in the marine construction department are remodeling the ship. Those in the navigation department will be able to take her out when she is completed.

The automobile school, presided over by Gunner Wilson, is one of the most interesting exhibits of thrift on the part of the Marine Corps. It is a large, well ventilated building, built originally for storage purposes. Those in charge of the school have obtained a lot of castoff machinery, including a number of lathes, which they have salvaged and put in as good condition as new.

Large charts are in place showing every part of almost every kind of an automobile, and the function of that part with relation to the whole construction. The men take old cars and tear them completely apart, even down to the springs. Then it is assembled, and if a part needs renewing the marine is taught how to make it. The result is that the school turns out some of the finest automobile mechanics that can be found. Those who show particular aptitude in the course are sent to the United States Army automobile school at Camp Holabird, Md., which the marines consider one of the finest schools in the country.

There are also primary schools, where men, especially men of foreign birth, are taught to read, speak and understand the English language. This school is in charge of Private Winter. Then, there is the grammar school, over which Private Bodai reigns. Languages are taught, too.

One of the most interesting schools is that where art, cartooning and architectural and mechanical drawing are taught. Privates Stephens and Matherne preside over these classes, and the men turn out some excellent work.

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THERE are 4,100 men now stationed at the camp, and of this number 1,800 go to the classes on every school day. But many of the marines study at night and do not take the time to attend the regular classes in the daytime, according to Gen. Butler.

These schools have proved their value and are an asset to the Marine Corps, and thus to the nation, in Gen. Butler's opinion. They send the men back to civil life trained for some particular work besides soldiering. And, best of all, it keeps the morale of the force on a very high plane. Gen. Butler is enthusiastic over the school plan and is doing everything to encourage them and to urge more of the men to take advantage of them. While the classes are not compulsory, those men who do not take them must perform the regular military duties of the camp during the school periods.

"These schools," Gen. Butler says, "help to make the military establishment cheaper to the taxpayer. All of our building in the camp now is done by our own men. We teach them how to do it. The industrial schools teach them to do things. We turn out carpenters, plumbers, stonemasons, painters, electricians—in fact, every kind of mechanic needed in building. The whole idea is to make the base self-supporting and at the same time train the men to do some one trade well."

Gen. Butler does not hesitate to get out himself and show the men how to do things in the quickest way. The other day he found the men at the quarry pulling the little narrow-gauge railway car up the steep "round two "takes," to a turn. He showed them some things he learned in the mining regions, by putting a block in the turn back of the track and passing the hauling line through it.

It is such things as this that make the men of the Quantico camp do things for the commanding general, and it was such acts of consideration for the men under him which he made him the popular officer in the Marine Corps that he is. He has a distinguished record as a fighter and stanch upholder of the dignity of the United States on foreign soil, and has the distinction of being the only officer in the United States service who has ever been awarded the congressional medal of honor twice.

PICTURES OF THE MARINE CORPS WORK AT QUANTICO IN THE ROTOGRAVURE SECTION OF TODAY'S STAR.

ONE OF THE CLASSROOMS OF THE MARINE SCHOOL AT QUANTICO.

Feeding the Family for Health

Prof. Lucile Brewer, food specialist of the School of Home Economics, New York State College of Agriculture (Cornell), lays particular stress on the necessity of using more milk, fruits, vegetables and cereals in the standard diet. She emphasizes the value of milk, saying that every child should have at least a pint and a half a day and every adult a pint. Below is one of the Cornell recipes which calls for the use of milk.

Whey Salad Dressing.

One cup whey, one-fourth cup vinegar, one teaspoon mustard, one-half teaspoon salt, one-eighth teaspoon turmeric, three tablespoons flour, one-fourth cup sugar, paprika, two tablespoons butter.

Heat the whey and vinegar together. Mix all the dry ingredients and add them to the whey. Add the butter and cook the mixture until it is smooth and thick.